

① 'Bad paymaster image must be shed'

BUMIPUTERA businessmen need to shed their bad paymaster image by taking loan repayments more seriously. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said being good paymasters will benefit the community as banks will not hesitate to give new loans to them for business expansion.

"The problem is that some Bumiputera businessmen are taking the repayment of loans lightly. If they borrow from Mara they think they can afford not to pay

as Mara, a government agency, will not take them to court," he said when addressing a seminar for petty traders and hawkers in Kuala Terengganu yesterday. The seminar was organised by Bank Bumiputra Malaysia.

As the borrowers are also voters, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said, these businessmen even feel that the Government will hesitate to take action as it will be afraid of losing its popularity.

"This is not a good practise. What happens is that because of a

few the whole community's image has been tarnished," he said.

Dr Mahathir said businessmen should follow the example of the Government which has benefited by getting new loans at a lower cost by just being prompt in repaying loans.

He said Malaysia not only pays its external loans on time but even prepaays to retire some if its loans early.

Speaking to reporters later, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is

Barisan Nasional chairman, said the BN will hold its supreme council meeting in a day or two to discuss election preparations and the list of candidates from among its component parties.

The Prime Minister will visit Sarawak on October 12 and Sabah the following day. He said that component parties in the states may be allowed to use their own symbols to contest in the coming general elections if there is no consensus among them.